

# Item 5

## AREA 1 FORUM

10<sup>th</sup> December 2007

### Report of the Assistant Chief Executive

#### Sedgefield Borough Local Improvement Programme

##### Application - Oxclose Nursery Parents Room.

This report highlights a Local Improvement Programme (LIP) application submitted to and initially appraised by the Strategy and Regeneration Section. The report provides information to the Area 1 Forum for their consideration and comments, which will be used to further develop the project proposal prior to it being taken through Sedgefield Borough Council's decision-making process.

The Area 1 Forum has been allocated £836,000 of LIP capital resources between 2006 and 2009. A total of £278,600 has been allocated to the year 2007/08 of which £188,503 has been approved to date. A range of projects were allocated in the previous year for this area, and there is some additional under-spend resulting from last year, which will be available to the Area Forum for additional project activity.

##### Project Background

- **Name of Project:** Oxclose Nursery Parents/Community Room and outdoor area.
- **Location:** Oxclose Crescent Spennymoor
- **Name of Applicant:** Oxclose Nursery School.
- **Brief Description of Project:**

To provide a purpose built venue for parents and the wider community to use to improve their learning skills i.e. Parenting classes, family learning sessions, confidential meetings, distance learning and informal drop in times. The project also aims to develop some unused land at the side of the nursery to create an outdoor all weather surfaced area for toddler play, to include willow structures, wildlife area, pathways and an area for growing vegetables and digging.

- **Requested from LIP: £57,551 (75%)**
- **Total Estimated Project Cost: £77,551**

- **What will the LIP be used for:**

- Building of Extension including professional fees and costs
- Development of garden for toddler use

**Impact of the Project:**

The applicant has stated that the project will be expected to have an impact on the Governments initiative to help to get people back to work by helping with improving adult's learning. The applicant would like to promote distance-learning courses and hold regular workshops and family learning session in the 'parent room'. Close links with Bishop Auckland College have been formed for distance learning. This would be offered to any adult in the community who wanted to extend their learning. As part of a healthier community, the project will offer drop-in sessions with the health visitor and an opportunity for parents to meet and discuss issues.

The applicant has also expressed the wish to develop some of the unused waste land at the side of the nursery to create an outdoor all weather surfaced area for toddler play including willow structures, a wildlife area, pathways and an area for growing vegetables and digging. This would provide an attractive learning environment for young children and outdoor play/being healthy are high priorities for the nursery. This facility would be extended to the wider community by offering it to any 2 and 3 year olds who would like to use the space.

- **Evidence of need and community support:**

The applicant has stated that consultation has taken place by way of questionnaires to over 300 parents from both the nursery and the Primary school. These were returned showing an overwhelming positive response to the provision of a Parent's Room and ideas of what could be provided within the project. As the majority of the parents and their extended families such as grandparents reside in the local area, the consultation has therefore included local residents. Bishop Auckland College and the Health Visitor have also been consulted to discuss what could be offered as a service to the local community and letters of support have been received.

- **Value for money and Revenue implications:**

The applicant has applied for £57,551 of LIP, which is 75% of the project costs. Three quotes have been sourced and a project manager engaged. Revenue costs will be absorbed into the nursery's annual budget.

### **Statutory Approvals:**

- Planning Permission and Building Regulations will be applied for.

Subject to discussion and agreement by the Area Forum to progress the project proposal, the applicant will work with the Strategy and Regeneration Division to inform a full appraisal of the LIP application prior to it being taken through Sedgefield Borough Council's decision-making process. This will include working with the partners identified, such as Bishop Auckland College, PCT to discuss the activities that will be held to ensure that a full Programme of use can be sustained within the proposed parents room.

### **Recommendation from the Strategy and Regeneration Section:**

That the Area Forum considers:

- The project proposal, and how it would meet the priority needs of the Area 1 locality.

### **Material considerations:**

#### **Other applications received from Area 1:**

In taking the above decision the Area Forum is requested to consider the implication of the funding level requested against the following projects that have been received for future determination by the Forum.

#### **Applications received and under development**

None

#### **Projects endorsed by Area Forum and waiting decision by SBC.**

None

#### **Projects Approved to date:**

2006/07	Tudhoe Grange School Family Centre	£ 15,226.00
2006/07	Spennymoor Settlement Technical Study	£ 3,231.00
2007/08	Middlestone Moor Play Area	£ 41,518.00
2007/08	Spennymoor Settlement	£140,000.00
2007/08	St Pauls Parish Hall Technical Study	£ 6,848.00

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